



**STATE OF MICHIGAN**

For Immediate Release  
June 16, 2004

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**Legacy of the Underground Railroad  
honored in Southwest Michigan**

**LANSING** – Senate Bill 241 and House Bill 5491, which commemorate Southwest Michigan's historic role in the Underground Railroad, were signed into law today.

"I am extremely pleased that we will be honoring the legacy of the Underground Railroad in Southwest Michigan," said Rep. Lorence Wenke, R-Richland. "This will serve as a reminder for everyone traveling these stretches of highway."

SB 241, sponsored by Sen. Tom George, R-Texas Township, names as the "Underground Railroad Memorial Highway," a section of U.S.-131 from U Avenue to West XY Avenue, encompassing the village of Schoolcraft.

HB 5491, sponsored by Wenke, included into the name designation a section of I-94 from Exit 98 in Calhoun County to Exit 110.

These sections of I-94 and U.S.-131 were chosen because they closely follow a portion of the "Quaker" or "Old Territorial Road" route, one of the most active and well-documented Underground Railroad routes in Michigan.

"The Underground Railway is an important part of our past where local residents put themselves at risk by harboring escaped slaves," George said. "This designation recognizes the bravery of the escaped slaves as well as the work done by our local forebears to aid the cause of liberty."

This two-bill package was a collaboration between George and Wenke, who also worked with the Schoolcraft Historical Society. Public Acts 139 and 140 of 2004 will take effect immediately.

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